

## Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), OGEN, SOPN, RH

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES TIMES STORY RE U.S. POLICY TOWARD  
RHODESIA

1. I HAVE TRACKED DOWN THE SOURCE OF THE STORY NANCY MUST  
HAVE READ IN THE LOS ANGELES TIMES AND ALTHOUGH THE STORY  
BEHIND THE STORY IS COMPLEX, THE FOLLOWING IS A DESCRIP-  
TION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THAT TIMES PIECE AND WHAT  
THE DEPARTMENT ACTUALLY SAID AT THE FEBRUARY 20 NOON PRESS  
BRIEFING.

2. THE BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE, DAVID ENNALS, REPORTEDLY  
TOLD A RECENT LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH  
SOCIETY THAT "NO BRITISH GOVERNMENT, OF WHATEVER POLITICAL  
FLAVOR, WOULD COMMIT BRITISH TROOPS ON THE CONTINENT OF  
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AFRICA IN A WAR ON BEHALF OF THE MINORITY AGAINST THE  
MAJORITY." ENNALS FURTHER DENIED ANY SECRET MILITARY DEAL  
WITH THE SMITH REGIME IN RHODESIA THAT WOULD "SUCK US INTO  
A RACE WAR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA." IN ANTICIPATION OF QUES-

TIONS FROM THE PRESS, S/PRS ON FEBRUARY 20 ASKED AF FOR LANGUAGE REGARDING OUR POSITION ON THE RHODESIA CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO SUPPORT OR ADVANCE THAT POSITION. THE ORIGINAL GUIDANCE AS PREPARED BY AF WAS WILDLY OVERBLOWN, AND DID SAY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO U.S. INTERVENTION IN A "RACE WAR." S/PRS PROPERLY SAW THE GUIDANCE AS INAPPROPRIATE AND OVERBLOWN, AND DISCOVERED THAT IT HAD NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH THE AF FRONT OFFICE.

3. IN BILL SCHAUFLE'S ABSENCE AND WITH NONE OF HIS DEPUTIES IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, S/PRS REWORKED THE GUIDANCE AND RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS AT THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING:

BEGIN TEXT Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA, THE POSSIBILITY OF ARMED INTERVENTION THERE?

A. BERNIE, THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF PRESS REPORTS IN THE LAST FEW DAYS THAT SUGGEST THAT THE COUNTRY, THAT RHODESIA, IS ON THE BRINK OF SOME SORT OF LARGE-SCALE GUERRILLA WAR, AND I WOULD ONLY SAY THAT WE THINK THAT THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN MR. SMITH, IAN SMITH, AND JOSHUA NKOMO ARE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. OUR SUPPORT FOR MAJORITY RULE IS FIRM AND IS UNCHANGED. AND THAT IS, WE SUPPORT EFFORTS, SUCH AS THE ONES NOW UNDERWAY, TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS IN RHODESIA. WE FAVOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO FULLY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AND MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. SO, TO ANSWER THE ORIGINAL QUESTION, WE THEREFORE URGE AGAIN THE REALISTIC ROAD TO SUCH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AT AN EARLY DATE. END TEXT

4. ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE, WHICH WAS OK, AP AND REUTERS FILED STORIES WHICH ACCURATELY REFLECT THE SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT. LATER THAT AFTERNOON HENRY KEYS (UPI) FILED A STORY ON THE BASIS OF A CONVERSATION HE HAD SUBSEQUENT TO THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING WITH SOMEONE IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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AFRICAN BUREAU. THE TEXT OF HIS REPORT (BELOW) REFERRED TO THE BUREAU OFFICER'S REMARKS AS AN "OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT "AND A BLUNT MESSAGE" TO SMITH "RELEASED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT." S/PRS SPOTTED THE STORY AND RECOGNIZED IT AS BASED ON THE INITIAL UNACCEPTABLE AF PRESS GUIDANCE. KEYS DID NOT INCLUDE ANY OF THE COMMENTS MADE DURING THE NOON BRIEFING AT WHICH HE WAS PRESENT.

BEGIN TEXT THE UNITED STATES TODAY URGED RHODESIA'S WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT TO START NEGOTIATING "REALISTICALLY" WITH BLACK NATIONALISTS AND WARNED THERE WILL BE NO U.S.

OR BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANY RHODESIAN RACE WAR.  
AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT RELEASED THE BLUNT MESSAGE TO  
RHODESIA'S PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH, DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS  
TOLD UPI PRIVATELY T;E RHODESIAN SITUATION IS AT "A  
CRITICAL FLASHPOINT" THAT COULD LEAD TO INVASIONS BY  
SOVIET-TRAINED GUERRILLAS FROM OTHER AFRICAN STATES.

THE OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT TOLD SMITH HIS  
GOVERNMENT, REPRESENTING 270,000 WHITES IN A LAND OF  
5.9 MILLION BLACKS, SHOULD MOVE FAST TO GET A POLITICAL  
SETTLEMENT WITH BLACK NATIONALISTS DEMANDING A SHARE IN  
GOVERNMENT AND EVENTUAL MAJORITY RULE. "IMPRESSED WITH  
THE URGENCY AND THE POTENTIAL FOR GREATLY EXPANDED VIOLENCE  
IN RHODESIA, WE ARE CALLING ON MR. SMITH AND THE WHITE  
REGIME TO NEGOTIATE REALISTICALLY AND SEIZE WHAT MAY WELL  
BE THEIR LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT,"  
THE STATEMENT SAID. "MR. SMITH AND HIS MINORITY REGIME  
CANNOT HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS THAT BRITAIN, OR ANY OTHER  
COUNTRY FOR THAT MATTER, COULD BE CALLED UPON TO RESCUE  
OR PROTECT THEM FROM ARMED CONFLICT." RHODESIA DECLARED  
UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN UNDER A WHITE SETTLER  
REGIME IN 1965. IT HAS BEEN PLAGUED SINCE BY SMALL SCALE  
BUT SPREADING GUERRILLA WARFARE. THE STATEMENT, HOWEVER,  
REPRESENTED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S FRANKEST ASSESSMENT  
YET ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FULLSCALE WAR. IN SALISBURY,  
SMITH SAID TODAY HE WAS CONSIDERING AN OFFER FROM BRITAIN  
TO HELP MEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BLACK NATIONALISTS.  
RHODESIAN BLACK NATIONALIST LEADER JOSHUA NKOMO SAID IN  
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, WEDNESDAY THE RESULTS WOULD  
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BE "TOO GHASTLY TO CONTEMPLATE" IF SMITH'S GOVERNMENT DID  
NOT OFFER AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE  
NEXT FEW MONTHS. HE AND SMITH HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATING OFF  
AND ON FOR TWO MONTHS WITH NO SIGN SMITH'S GOVERNMENT IS  
PREPARED TO OFFER MAJOR POLITICAL CONCESSIONS TO THE  
BLACKS. IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH UPI, SOME STATE  
DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THEY FEAR RHODESIA COULD SOON  
REPLACE ANGOLA AS A THEATER OF WARFARE WITH HEAVY  
COMMUNIST, BLACK AFRICAN AND PERHAPS EVEN CUBAN TROOP  
INVOLVEMENT. THEY SAID THERE WERE PROSPECTS OF INVASIONS  
BY BATTALIONS OF SOVIET-TRAINED BLACK GUERRILLAS FROM  
NEIGHBORING MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA, WHO WOULD FIGHT ALONG-  
SIDE NATIVE RHODESIAN INSURGENTS TRAINED BY CHINESE  
"ADVISERS." END TEXT

5. EVEN THOUGH S/PRS HAD GONE TO GREAT PAINS TO REVISE  
THE INITIAL BUREAU GUIDANCE AND HAD RESPONDED AT THE PRESS  
BRIEFING IN A MODULATED WAY, THE BUREAU OFFICER WITH WHOM  
KEYS TALKED WAS APPARENTLY UNAWARE THAT HIS OWN BUREAU'S  
INITIAL GUIDANCE HAD BEEN REJECTED AND REDONE. AS A

RESULT OF S/PRS'S IMMEDIATE DAMAGE CONTROL EFFORTS, UPI ISSUED A HOLD ON THE KEYS STORY AND ADVISED THAT A CLARIFIED VERSION WOULD FOLLOW. IN ADDITION S/PRS CONTACTED ALL THREE NETWORKS AND ADVISED THEM OF THE UPI ERROR AND EXPLAINED THAT THE AP AND REUTERS VERSIONS WERE CORRECT REFLECTIONS OF DEPARTMENT POLICY ON RHODESIA. THE REVISED UPI STORY (BELOW) CAME OUT ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THE ORIGINAL KEYS REPORT, BUT AT LEAST DESCRIBED THE COMMENTS AS HAVING BEEN MADE BY A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL AND NOT AS AN OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT STATEMENT. WHICH OF THE TWO STORIES THE L.A. TIMES USED I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO DETERMINE.

BEGIN TEXT CORRESPONDENTS: THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS AN EARLIER UPI STORY INCORRECTLY DESCRIBES THE COMMENTS ON RHODESIA AS AN OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT STATEMENT. THE COMMENTS WERE MADE BY A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL AND THE FOLLOWING REPEAT CLARIFIES ATTRIBUTION.

A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID TODAY RHODESIA'S WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT SHOULD START NEGOTIATING "REALIST-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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CALLY" WITH BLACK NATIONALISTS AND WARNED THERE WILL BE NO U.S. OR BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANY RHODESIAN RACE WAR. OTHER STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES, MEANTIME, SAID PRIVATELY THAT PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH'S RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT IS FACING "A CRITICAL FLASHPOINT" SITUATION

THAT COULD LEAD TO INVASIONS BY SOVIET-TRAINED GUERRILLAS FROM OTHER AFRICAN STATES." "MR. SMITH AND HIS REGIME SHOULD NEGOTIATE REALISTICALLY WITH THE BLACK RHODESIANS AND SEIZE WHAT MIGHT WELL BE THEIR LAST OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT," THE OFFICIAL SAID IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON THE RHODESIAN SITUATION. "NEITHER MR. SMITH NOR HIS MINORITY REGIME CAN HAVE ANY ILLUSIONS THAT BRITAIN, OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY FOR THAT MATTER, COULD BE CALLED UPON TO RESCUE OR PROTECT THEM FROM ARMED CONFLICT." RHODESIA, WHICH DECLARED UNILATERAL INDEPENDENCE FROM BRITAIN UNDER A WHITE SETTLER REGIME IN 1965, HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY SMALL SCALE BUT SPREADING GUERRILLA WARFARE FOR YEARS. IN SALISBURY, SMITH SAID TODAY HE WAS CONSIDERING AN OFFER FROM BRITAIN TO HELP MEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BLACK NATIONALISTS. RHODESIAN BLACK NATIONALIST LEADER JOSHUA NKOMO SAID IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, WEDNESDAY THE RESULTS WOULD BE "TOO GHASTLY TO CONTEMPLATE" IF SMITH'S GOVERNMENT DID NOT OFFER AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SETTLEMENT WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. HE AND SMITH HAVE BEEN NEGOTIATING OFF AND ON FOR TWO MONTHS WITH NO SIGN SMITH'S GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO OFFER MAJOR POLITICAL CONCESSIONS TO THE BLACKS. IN

PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH UPI, SOME STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THEY FEAR RHODESIA COULD SOON REPLACE ANGOLA AS A THEATER OF WARFARE WITH HEAVY COMMUNIST, BLACK AFRICAN AND PERHAPS EVEN CUBAN TROOP INVOLVEMENT. THEY SAID THERE WERE PROSPECTS OF INVASIONS BY BATTALIONS OF SOVIET-TRAINED BLACK GUERRILLAS FROM NEIGHBORING MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA, WHO WOULD FIGHT ALONGSIDE NATIVE RHODESIAN INSURGENTS TRAINED BY CHINESE "ADVISERS." END TEXT

6. THE PRESS SPOKESMAN, I THINK, DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE, AND I HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO SEE THAT THE AF OFFICER RESPONSIBLE IS REPRIMANDED. IN ADDITION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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IF YOU APPROVE, I PLAN TO HAVE S/PRS ISSUE A FORMAL STATEMENT AT THE NOON BRIEFING MONDAY TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PRESS SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT DURING THE FEBRUARY 20 BRIEFING, AND NOT EITHER THE ORIGINAL OR REVISED UPI STORY, IS THE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER. IN THE END, IT IS KEYS OF THE LA TIMES WHO IS MOST TO BLAME, SINCE HE HAD ATTENDED THE PRESS BRIEFING AT WHICH THE SPOKESMAN ISSUED THE LOW-KEY STATEMENT.

APPROVE . . . . DISAPPROVE . . . . ISSUANCE OF STATEMENT  
MONDAY. EAGLEBURGER

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